

REMARKS

Claim 28 has been amended to overcome the rejection based upon 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Claims 7, 9-12, 18, 20-22, 25-28 and 30-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Onoda (US 6,187,242) in view of Bickford et al. (US 6,506,083). The examiner is requested to reconsider this rejection.

Claim 8 has been cancelled without prejudice and its features have been added to claim 7. In view of page 5 of the office action, it is believed that claim 7, and all claims dependent thereon, are now in condition for allowance.

Claim 18 has been amended to clarify applicants' claimed invention. In particular, claim 18 claims that connector body comprising a second plurality of ribs comprising a substantially uniform series of ribs looping around an exterior of the connector body. The second plurality of ribs comprises a substantially uniform series of ribs looping around an exterior of the connector body help to form the tortuous path to prevent fuel vapors from flowing between the joint between the connector body and the fuel flange. Fig. 3 of Onoda does not disclose or suggest a substantially uniform series of ribs looping around an exterior. The features of claim 18 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, claim 18 is patentable and should be allowed.

Though dependent claims 19-22 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 18. However, to

expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

Claim 25 has been amended to clarify applicants' claimed invention. In particular, claim 25 claims that the pre-mold housing comprises a series of circumferential ribs on an exterior side which form a second tortuous joint between the flange member and the pre-mold electrical connector. Onoda does not disclose or suggest a series of circumferential ribs on an exterior side. The features of claim 25 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, claim 25 is patentable and should be allowed.

Though dependent claims 26-32 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 25. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

Favorable consideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the examiner is invited to call applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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